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Vocabulary Readers

A Brave Pilot



by Carl Olsen

Number of Words: 660

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A Brave Pilot



by Carl Olsen



Strategy Focus

As you read, think of **questions** to ask about Antoine de Saint-Exupéry's life.



HOUGHTON MIFFLIN

BOSTON

Key Vocabulary

accomplish succeed in doing; complete

accounting detailed story; record of events

aviation flying

disappearance act of vanishing

inspiration something that drives someone to act or create

journal diary or notebook

navigator someone who plans and records a plane's journey

runway strip of pavement where airplanes take off and land

taxied moved a plane slowly before takeoff or after landing

transmission message sent by radio

Word Teaser

What do a car and a radio broadcast have in common?

It was a rainy, windy morning in 1926. Pilot Antoine de Saint-Exupéry (an TWAN de SAN ex oo PAY ree) **taxied** his plane slowly down a **runway** in France.

The pilot's plane was filled with bags of mail. A small company had hired him to fly the mail from France to Africa. This was the first job they had given him.





Saint-Exupéry had to fly over these high mountains in Spain.

Saint-Exupéry knew that the route was dangerous. He would have to fly across mountains and desert. In the mountains, pilots could crash into peaks hidden by fog. In the desert, they faced sandstorms and heat. The night before Saint-Exupéry's flight, another pilot on the same route had crashed and died.

As he took off, Saint-Exupéry wondered if he would be able to **accomplish** his task.



**A navigator
and a pilot.**

Aviation was much riskier in the 1920s than it is today. Planes didn't have modern equipment such as radar to guide them. So pilots had to find their way on their own. Sometimes pilots flew with a **navigator**. Navigators used landmarks on the ground, such as lakes or hills, to tell where they were going. But this method didn't always work. Bad weather conditions, such as fog or clouds, made it hard to see landmarks.

There were other problems, too. Sometimes a plane's engine stopped running during a flight. Other times the steering failed. Fire was another great danger. Planes could burst into flames in midair.



That rainy morning in France, Saint-Exupéry took off with no problem. But just two hours later, he ran into danger. The weather turned bad. Lightning lit up the sky. Thunder boomed all around the little plane.

Saint-Exupéry tried his best to steady the plane. Finally the weather cleared. Night fell. Saint-Exupéry watched the sky fill with stars. The beauty of the night sky amazed him. It felt wonderful to be alive.

The young pilot had survived his first brush with danger.



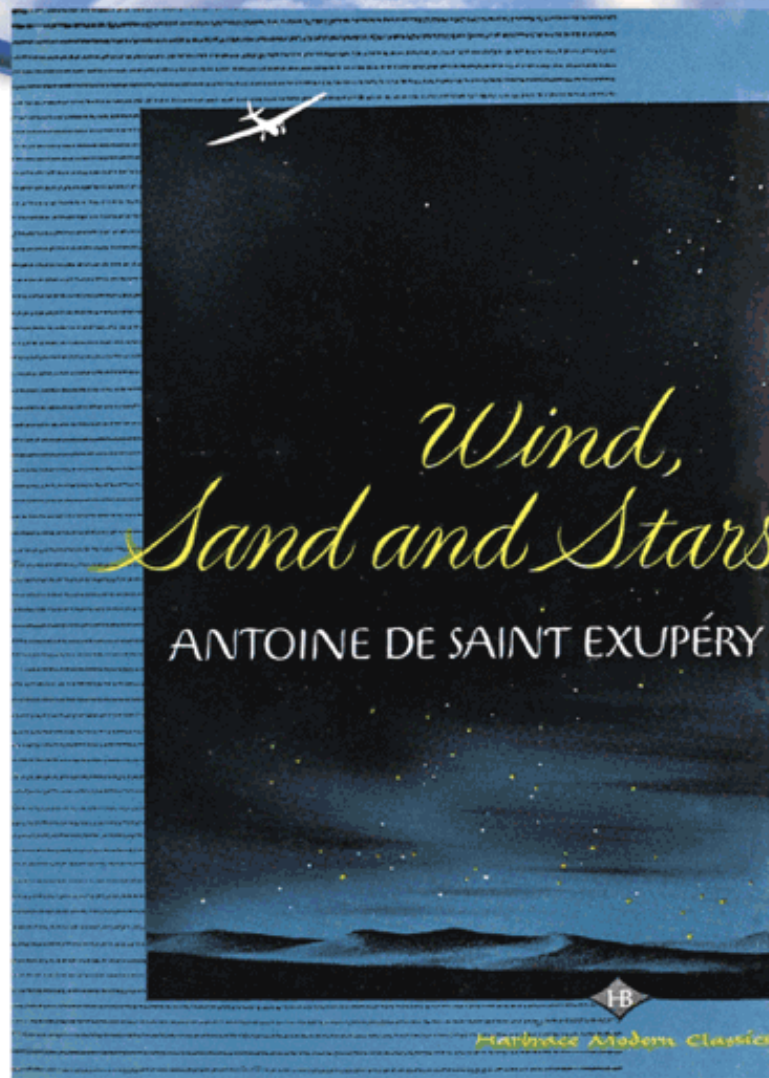
In the early years of aviation, pilots often crash landed.

But there were more challenges ahead of him. Later that same year, Saint-Exupéry had his first crash landing. More crashes followed. Sometimes he wasn't hurt. Other times he was badly injured. Still, he kept on flying.

One of Saint-Exupéry's worst crashes happened in the desert of Libya. Luckily, he and his one passenger survived. But they crashed far from any town. They had to walk more than 100 miles in the desert heat. They nearly died of thirst. Finally, they met up with a group of traders who helped them reach safety.

Saint-Exupéry loved writing about his adventures as a pilot.

Wind, Sand and Stars,
by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry,
illustration by David Diaz,
published by Harcourt, Brace
& World Inc.



Despite the danger, Saint-Exupéry worked as a pilot for many years. But flying was not his only passion. He also loved to write. He recorded many of his flying adventures in notebooks and **journals**. He used the information in his journals to write books.

Saint-Exupéry published many books in his lifetime. One of his books was a real-life **accounting** of his adventures as a mail pilot. It was called *Wind, Sand, and Stars*. It was one of the best adventure books of its time.

**Saint-Exupéry's plane
was shot down over the
Mediterranean Sea.**



Saint-Exupéry in the cockpit of a fighter plane.

In 1939, World War II began in Europe. Saint-Exupéry volunteered as a pilot for the French Air Force. But in 1940, Germany invaded France and took over the government. Saint-Exupéry escaped to the United States. Then, in 1943, he joined the French Air Force again.

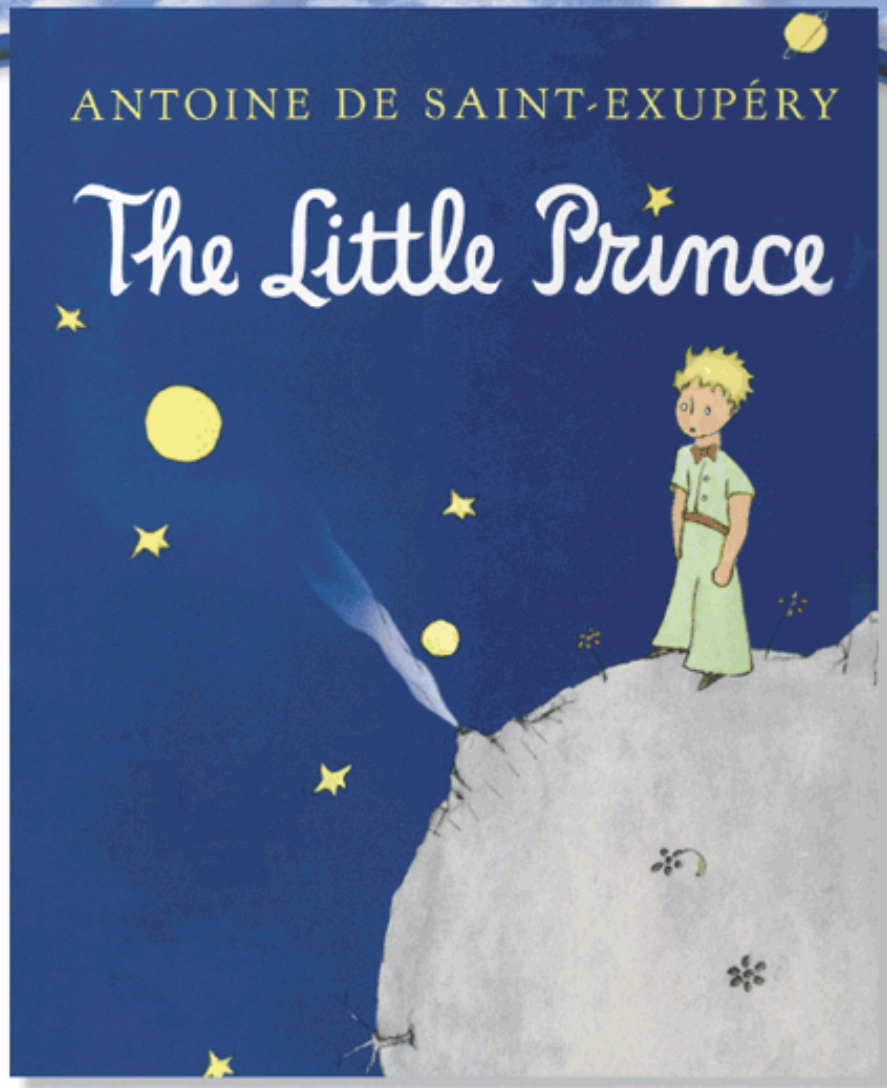
The next year, Saint-Exupéry's plane was shot down in a battle over the Mediterranean Sea. He was not able to send a radio **transmission** to report on his condition. He was never seen again.



ANTOINE DE SAINT-EXUPÉRY

The Little Prince

The Little Prince,
written and illustrated by
Antoine de Saint-Exupéry,
published by Harcourt, Inc.



Antoine Saint-Exupéry's disappearance was a sad loss. Still, his spirit lives on in the wonderful books he left behind.

Saint-Exupéry's most famous book is *The Little Prince*. It tells the story of a pilot lost in the desert. The pilot meets a prince from a faraway planet. The prince helps the pilot discover the true meaning of life.

Today, *The Little Prince* is a favorite of adults and children around the world. It gives inspiration to people seeking meaning in their own lives.

Responding

Putting Words to Work

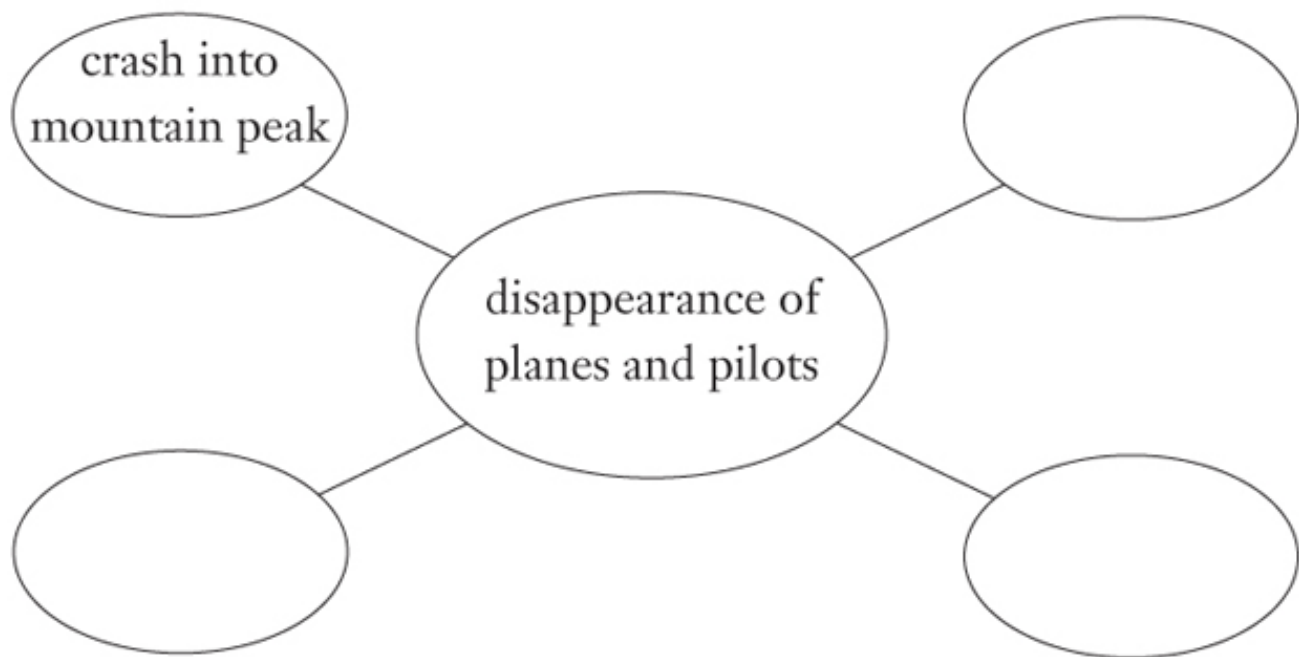
1. What did Saint-Exupéry **accomplish** during his life?
2. Did you find any **inspiration** in Saint-Exupéry's life? Explain your answer.
3. Saint-Exupéry used his **journals** to write books such as *Wind, Sand, and Stars*. The author writes, "It was one of the best adventure books of its time." Is that a fact or an opinion? Explain your answer.
4. What is the job of an airplane **navigator**?
5. **PARTNER ACTIVITY:** Think of a word you learned in the text. Explain its meaning to your partner and give an example.

Answer to Word Teaser

They both use a **transmission**.

Word Builder

In Saint-Exupéry's time, a number of problems could cause the **disappearance** of planes and pilots. Copy the word web. Add problems that lead to plane crashes and disappearances.



Write About It

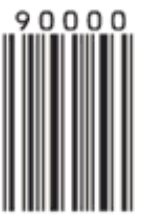
Write a paragraph describing some of the dangers of flying during Antoine de Saint-Exupéry's lifetime. Use some of the words and phrases from your Word Builder web in your paragraph.

Key Vocabulary

accomplish
accounting
aviation
disappearance
inspiration
journal
navigator
runway
taxied
transmission

6.2.1

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